

589. The Gilgamesli epic. The Gilgaraesh epic which originated in the Euphrates valley more than 2000 years B.C.¹ consists of a number of episodes which were later collected and coordinated into a single work like other great epics. Jastrow² construes it as a variation of the story of Adam and Eve. Gilgamesh is a hero admired by all women. The elders of Uruk beg his mother, the mother-goddess Aruru (a form of Ishtar), to restrain him. In order to comply she makes of clay Eabani, a satyr-like, hairy wild man, with a tail and horns, who lives with the beasts. Jastrow thinks that this means that he consorted with female beasts, having as yet no female of his own species. No one could capture him, so the god Shamash assailed him by lust, sending to him a priestess of Ishtar who won him to herself (woman) away from beasts. She said to him : "Thou shalt be like a god. Why dost thou lie with beasts?" " She revealed his soul to Eabani." She was, therefore, a culture heroine, and the myth means that, with the knowledge of sex, awoke consciousness, intelligence, and civilization. Eabani followed the priestess to Uruk, where he and Gilgamesh became comrades,—heroes of war and slayers of monsters. Ishtar fell in love with Gilgamesh, but he refused her because all men and beasts whom she loved she reduced to misery. Her vengeance for this rejection brings woe and death on the two friends. The Mexicans had a similar myth that the sun god and the maize goddess produced life in vegetation by their sex activity. The sun god contracted venereal disease so that they probably connected syphilis with sexual excess.³ In the worship of Ishtar at Uruk there were three grades of harlot

priestesses, and there
the temple consecration of women was practiced
in recognition
of the connection between the service of Ishtar and
civilization.
At first the goddesses of life and of love were the
same. The
Venus of reproduction and the Venus of carnal lust
were later
distinguished. At some periods the distinction was
sharply
maintained. At other times the former Venus
was only an

¹ Maspero, *Peuples de F Orient*, I, 576, 589.

² *Amer. Jo. Semit. Lang, and Lit.*, XV, 201.

³ *Archivf. Anthro\$.*, XXIX, 156.